WE CLAIM:

1. A method in a computer system for providing a single access point to an application, comprising:

receiving, over a communication network from a client machine, an application request at a portal framework;

determining a requested feature content mechanism using the application request from a plurality of feature content mechanisms;

routing at least a portion of the application request to the requested feature content mechanism;

building a response with the requested feature content mechanism based on the routed portion of the application request and having an application content portion;

modifying the response by integrating a reusable presentation container portion with the application content portion; and

transmitting the modified response from the portal framework over the communication network to the client machine.

2. The method of Claim 1, further including with the portal framework retrieving and storing data specific to the application and a listing of the feature content mechanisms in cache memory and initializing the application based on the application-specific data.

3. The method of Claim 1, further including prior to the routing to the requested feature content mechanism, routing at least a portion of the application request to a feature controller previously created by the portal framework based on a controller identifier retrieved from the requested feature content mechanism.

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4.   The method of Claim 3, further including creating a feature model interface with the portal framework based on a message from the feature controller, wherein the feature content page retrieves display properties from the feature model interface prior to the building.

5.   The method of Claim 4, wherein the feature model interface retrieves the display properties from a business model mechanism defining business rules.

6.   The method of Claim 4, further including prior to the building, retrieving with the feature model interface service data specific to the application request.

7.   The method of Claim 4, wherein the building is performed using Java™ Server Pages.

8.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the reusable presentation portion includes a header, a menu, and a footer.

9.   The method of Claim 1, further including verifying a user authorized to access the application is logged in at the client machine.

10. A computer system for managing operation of an application to provide a service to users and to facilitate feature development for the application, comprising:
a service application including feature mechanisms for providing functions of the service, wherein each of the feature mechanisms includes a model interface portion, a view portion, and a controller portion;

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a memory device storing data related to the
10 application; and

a portal framework linked to a communication network
and adapted for receiving from a client over the
communication network a user request and for transmitting
a response to the client, wherein the portal framework is
15 further configured to process the user request to
determine a requested one of the feature mechanisms, to
route the user request to the requested feature
mechanism, and to build the response with the view
portion of the identified feature mechanisms using the
20 application data in the memory device.

11. The computer system of Claim 10, wherein each
of the feature mechanisms can be replaced without
modification of other ones of the feature mechanisms and
the portal framework.

12. The computer system of Claim 10, wherein the
controller portion comprises a feature controller and the
model interface comprises a feature model interface with
properties set by the feature controller.

13. The computer system of Claim 12, wherein the
view portion comprises a feature content page retrieved
by the portal framework based on an identifier in the
user request and having properties obtained from the
5 feature model interface.

14. The computer system of Claim 13, wherein
feature content page is blocked from accessing the
feature controller.

15. The computer system of Claim 13, wherein the
feature controller is blocked from accessing the
response.

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16. The computer system of Claim 12, wherein the portal framework further includes a connection pool having a set of connections to the memory device and a data access layer for controlling use of the connections and wherein the feature model interface is adapted to interface with the data access layer to retrieve the application-related data as part of operating the view portion.

17. The computer system of Claim 10, wherein the response comprises application content provided by the view portion and a presentation portion integrated with the application portion by the portal framework.

18. The computer system of Claim 17, wherein the response is in HTTP form including Java™ Server Page segments from the portal framework and the view portion.

19. A service portal, comprising:

means linked to a communication network for receiving a user request for a service;

means for processing the user request to determine a requested feature of the service from a number of service features;

means for retrieving a means for displaying feature content and for routing the user request to the feature content display means; and

means for building a response to the user request, wherein the response comprises a standard content provided for all responses for the service features and a feature page created by the feature content display means.

20. The service portal of Claim 19, further including means for providing separate access to

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application information used by the building means for creating the standard content and to feature information used by the feature content display means in creating the feature page.

21. The service portal of Claim 19, further including means for verifying the user request was sent by a user authorized to access the requested feature of the service.

22. The service portal of Claim 19, wherein the building means and the feature content display means comprise Java™ Server Page technology.

23. The service portal of Claim 19, including means for retrieving and caching data specific to the application and a listing of the service features for use by the processing and building means.

24. The service portal of Claim 19, means for separating operation of the feature content display means and control means for the identified feature.

25. The service portal of Claim 19, wherein the feature content display means comprises a connection pool for providing a set of connections to service data for inclusion in the feature page, a data access layer for managing the set of connections, and an interface to the data access layer and a business model providing populated objects based on business rules.